Voices of Winthrop politics

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Staff Writer

Winthrop contains different political beliefs that have manifested themselves into organizations. Three political organizations that exist on campus are College Democrats, College Republicans and Socialist Student Union. Each organization has their own thoughts on this upcoming election, and the candidates that have been under scrutiny since the race for presidency began.

The Organization

The College Democrats at Winthrop are looking to get the word out about their chapter. According to Parker Quinlan, the chief-of-staff, "We facilitate the democratic party on Winthrop's campus, so the idea is that the democratic party can have outreach on college campuses across the country and part of what we do as a democratic chapter is reach out to college students and help facilitate the DNC's operation on college campuses."

The College Republicans attempt to get their messages out through the events they host as well as through social media. According to Media Secretary Sydney Hankinson, "We really try to get involved by hosting debate watches, doing cold calls for local Republican politicians, and interviewing those in the community who are leaders of the conservative movement."

They have also started their own YouTube channel and recently held an election rally in McBryde that garnered over one-hundred people.

A lesser known organization on campus is the Socialist Student Union. Gabriel Paxton, head of the Socialist Student Union, expresses the focus point of the organization. He said, "The organization is a campus political group aimed at educating the student body on the political and economic school of socialism. Further we, as a group, are dedicated to fighting injustices on campus and within the greater Charlotte area."

They have done so by holding events that shed light on socialism and are possibly holding a few symposiums in the weeks leading up to the election.

A Discussion on Candidates

The nature of this election and, specifically the candidates, has left many pondering the choice of "Who do I choose?" While the case was made for both Clinton and Trump, the organizations all had one aspect in common and that was the nature of the election.

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>
> **Sydney Hankinson**
> *Media Secretary*

Hankinson said, "This is honestly such an exciting election to be alive for, simply because of how unorthodox both candidates are. It's both thrilling and terrifying to watch. I really do feel like we're watching an important part of history in the making."

Quinlan of the College Democrats had similar thoughts on the notion of seeing history in the making. He said, "It's been a long, long cycle. That's the thing I think people really need to understand. No matter who your person is, a lot of folks are having fatigue, voter fatigue, and my thoughts on the cycle generally are it's definitely going to change the way that a lot of people look at American politics and it's definitely going to change the way a lot of people look at the status of the presidency."

As for Paxton, he made a direct point on how the election portrays the United States, and the candidates themselves. "I believe this election reflects poorly on the United States. On one hand we have Donald Trump, a man who has exploited much of the working class for profit and who is downright disgusting in his language and actions towards women and minorities. Clinton is easily the better choice, however, her connection to corporate America and her hawkish foreign policy is hard for a socialist like myself to overlook," he said.

Tea Franco / The Johnsonian

Congressman Mick Mulvaney, State Senate Candidate Mark Palmer, State Senator Elect Wes Climer Chairman of the York County Republican Party Joel Hamilton and a few other leaders stood for photos together.

Janay Reece / The Johnsonian

A copy of the 2014 Legislative Manual from the South Carolina state house.

A Final Note

As the election continues to unfold in the coming weeks before Nov. 8, each organization have ideas they wish to convey to the students of Winthrop, and a final remark on the election that could possibly change history.

Quinlan said, "We are an organization that is unique in the regards in our ability to cross cut race, gender and sexual orientation status. So we have a lot of intersectionality within our organization. And I think that the general consensus is that we are extremely excited to see that glass ceiling get broken again after having seen it in 2008 with the first election of a black president."

As for Paxton, he states the stance of his organization. He said, "Ultimately, our organization believes that we must address the growing disparity in income and capital wealth in this nation. The capitalist system has disproportionately benefitted a few, while disenfranchising many in our eyes."

Despite the differences of the parties, Hankinson wants voters to remember who we are as a nation.

"This election is obviously a very controversial one. However, I think it's important that we all do our best to be respectful and rational when discussing it with each other, even when we may not agree. Violence and name-calling from either side of the aisle is counterproductive and immature, and has no place among civilized adults. Regardless of the outcome of this election, we are all still going to be living in this country together and we must be able to stay civil so we can make America a better place for future generations."

Inside the voting process, after the ballot

What happens with your ballot after you vote?

Zuri Anderson
Staff Writer

When citizens go to vote for the next president, it is important to understand how this process works and how the ballot is processed.

When voters submit their ballot for the general election, they are voting for electors. The electors' votes decide who becomes president.

The number of electors per state is equal to the amount of representatives in Congress (Senate and the House of Representatives). 538 electors make up the electoral college in the United States, including Washington D.C., which receives three electors.

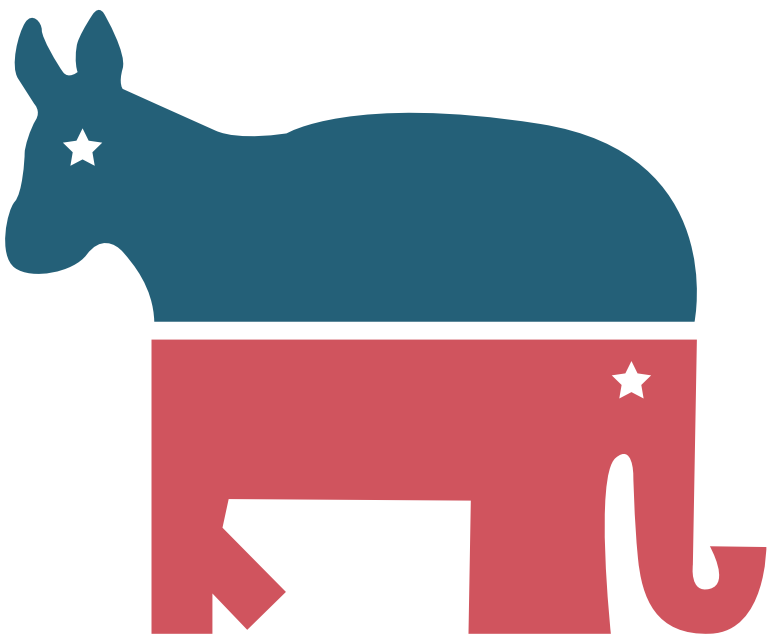
"People don't always understand that it's not a national election; t's 51 separate elections," Dr. John Holder, adjunct professor in Political Science said.

The candidate who wins the state gets their electoral votes. A candidate needs at least 270 electoral votes, the majority, to win the presidential election. Holder said that Maine and Nebraska are the exceptions.

"The winner in each congressional district gets one electoral vote, and the winner of the state as a whole gets an additional two," Holders said.

After the citizens vote, electors begin voting from mid-November through Dec. 19 this year. A projected winner is announced on the night of Election Day, that is, the winner of the popular vote. Congress meets to count the electoral votes on January 6, 2017.

It is possible for candidates to win the popular vote but lose the electoral vote. One of these rare occurrences happened in 2000, when Al Gore won the popular vote but lost the electoral vote to George W. Bush.



Kristin Streetman / The Johnsonian

"[Voting] is one part of the social contract wherein democratic governments institute the people's will," said Dr. Chris Van Aller of the Political Science Department.

According to a study done by International IDEA on voter turnout, voter turnout is one measure of citizen participation in politics.

"It is usually expressed as the percentage of voters who cast a vote [or turnout] at an election. This total number of voters includes those who cast blank or invalid votes, as they still participate," the study said.

"Voting practices, good and bad, need examination as well. Some countries use unrepresentative or fraudulent voting to give power to undemocratic leaders, such as Putin in Russia or Mugabe in Zimbabwe," Van Aller said.

According to the Pew Research Center, the United States ranks low compared to other countries.

Their August 2, 2016 study found that U.S. turnout in the 2012 presidential election was 53.6 percent, based on 129.1 million votes cast and an estimated voting-age population of just under 241 million people.

They would look at eligible voters, but many factors go into voter eligibility, such as residency rules, citizenship and imprisonment.

The highest turnout rates were in Belgium (87.2 percent), Turkey (84.3 percent) and Sweden (82.6 percent). For Belgium and Turkey, voting is compulsory, or mandatory.

"Voting is the ultimate symbol in a democracy of legitimacy, that is the right and authority to rule," Van Aller said.